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Welcome to Together We Heal, a new podcast brought to you by SCP Health. As one of the largest healthcare partners in the country, we work to bring hospitals and healers together in pursuit of clinical effectiveness. Our programs span the entire continuum of care, including emergency medicine, hospital medicine, wellness, telemedicine, intensive care, and ambulatory care. On Together We Heal, we will share expertise from our clinical and business leaders on how to create healthier communities, both within and outside the four walls of the hospital.

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Today on Together We Heal, we are going to discuss how to build a vision for the future during COVID. 2020 was undoubtedly a year unlike any we have ever experienced. If we were writing a book about the pandemic that would explain the different challenges and opportunities from certain periods throughout the last year, the first chapter would be called "Shock and awe." Spring of 2020 was a time of feast or famine for hospitals, with clinicians and healthcare professionals rushing into the crisis like heroes.

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Chapter two would be called "Restoring trust." We covered this difficult time in our second episode, which answered the question, how do you position your facility as an essential pillar in your community's wellbeing and growth? The third chapter, "Testing resilience," would tell the story of the third peak, when another spike of COVID from last fall, through the beginning of this year, tested us once again. We dove into how you could tackle some of the most pressing issues of this chapter in our episodes, Surviving disaster fatigue, and Building a culture of resilience, Innovatively flexing your workforce to meet current demands and The power of a strong leader and why it matters more than ever before.

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And here we are writing chapter four, "Prevailing and resetting." Henry Kissinger once said, "The historic challenge for leaders is to manage the crisis while building the future. The future is upon us." While the COVID crisis is not fully in our rear view mirror, COVID has given us a strong call to action to use what we've learned in the industry to improve, grow, adapt, and ultimately provide better patient care. The question is, how do you plan to maintain your role as the trusted advisor in your community? Let's dive into what we have learned and how you will write your health systems next chapter of prevailing and resetting for success in the months ahead.

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The first thing we have learned is that patients have fears. Patients need confidence in their healthcare teams and they need authoritative and trustful communication from clinicians. Patients have shown us they're willing to and learn. For instance, we saw behaviors around public hygiene become more seriously adopted by people in our communities in response to recommendations from the CDC and healthcare experts. What does all of this mean for you and your healthcare system?

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First, don't stop sharing the facts. Use the momentum you gained as a trusted advisor in your community by continuing to engage with members of your community for long after the pandemic ends. The second thing we have learned is that developing new strategies for access to care for your patients will be of utmost importance. One silver lining from the pandemic was how quickly the healthcare system adjusted with waivers that removed silos, barriers and bureaucratic obstacles to make care more available to patients, such as in the area of tele-health. What does this mean for you?

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Now is not the time for you to become stagnant with innovations and ideas. You have a golden opportunity to embrace change and adapt to alternative care delivery models and new technology. Another important area of lessons that we learned is that the industry is aware that COVID-related trauma will be pervasive for years to come. As heroic and resilient as they are, clinicians are humans too, and they will also need care. We will all reach a point where we are going to need to ask for help, need to be helped or will need to offer help. The question is what actions can you take to leverage these lessons learned?

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In addition to prioritizing access to and the acceptability of mental health support, clinical and business leaders will need to set an example of resilience, compassion, and hope. You should recognize hard work, be available to your clinical teams and show your appreciation often. We have two key steps that you should consider when building your strategic plan for the future.

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First, invest in staff loyalty. You can not be viewed as a trusted advisor if your clinicians do not trust you. Pre-COVID, most staff members were worried about their salary, benefits, lifestyle, workload, and the facility's reputation. Post-COVID, they care about those same needs, but now, they also want to know they are appreciated and supported. They want to know their health

system is organized and prepared. They want to see their health system invest in the community, and they want job security.

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Medical leadership and hospital management have an additional responsibility, helping your team members stay connected to their purpose. Collaborating with your clinical teams is very important. SCP recommends holding debriefing sessions with clinical team members by asking and listening to what they want and need. Then, use the themes from those sessions to develop action plans to foster change in your organization. Offering support groups during times of crisis and disaster will also help.

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We have five additional tips for improving clinician loyalty. One, clarify goals. Ensure everyone is on the same page and understands the organization's goals clearly. Two, engage in shared purpose. Start by listening and showing respect for diverse views and co-create processes that will help turn the vision into reality. Three, appeal to self-interest. Find what motivates staff members. Creating a survey that asks respondents to list factors is a good way to start to motivate change. Four, embrace tradition. Change happens, but that doesn't mean your health system has to loosen itself from the moorings of time-honored, valued traditions. Promote those as the glue that binds staff together. Five, don't underestimate the power of leadership. People need someone to follow. You are in the driver's seat as an executive. So, steer with confidence.

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The second step is recapturing and maintaining patient loyalty and trust. Before the pandemic, patient trust in doctors and the health system was declining and had been for you years. There is hope, however, if health system leaders and staff make a concerted effort to maintain and increase momentum in community outreach in order to improve their reputations and continue to build patient trust. We learned communication is the root cause of many problems, as well as most solutions. It is important to remember to listen more, speak less.

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An example of this would be that, during the pandemic, teens grew tired of constantly being given rules for what they could not do and wanted to be told advice for safe ways to socialize. The takeaway, consider your audience, consider your message and consider how you deliver that message to your audience. Patients will also be curious to see if you can offer them more convenient treatment options. They'll want to know they are safe in your hospital. They'll want to be more engaged through patient portals, which will empower them to their own healthcare.

Patient satisfaction is how they will measure your quality as a health system. To that end, you must make an effort to be more actively involved in the community and address social determinants of health.

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A word of caution, it is important that the community sees your health system and its staff stepping into community betterment, not just because they have to, but because they want to. Regardless of the direction you take, the goal is to improve the quality of life for the people in your community and take a step toward restoring trust and building patient loyalty. View the community as your patient and take substantive measures to improve population health. It's well-regarded that patients who trust healthcare are more satisfied with their treatment and pursue healthier behaviors. When trust erodes, both patients and hospitals suffer. Hospitals and clinicians must work in tandem to restore confidence, and ultimately, see long term success as the provider of choice in their communities.

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In our final message of season one of *Together We Heal*, we leave you with this thought, a crisis of this magnitude has proven to be a catalyst for positive change. The last year has brought forth leaders, trust, innovation, and more. Don't lose the momentum you have gained. Once you have reflected, once you have grieved, once you have celebrated, then you should cast your vision for the future of your organization. Let members of your health system know that if together you can get through COVID, then you can achieve anything.

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In the meantime, get to know us and find out what we can accomplish together by visiting our website, scp-health.com. Here, you can learn how we've helped hospitals like yours take action to streamline hospital operations, implement cost and revenue solutions, achieve clinical quality goals and more. Again, that's scp-health.com. See you next time.